

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 3rd October 2024, 6.30 pm
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Chorley and
www.youtube.com/user/ChorleyCouncil

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the above meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was published.

Agenda No Item

6 Corporate Strategy Refresh 2024-2025

(Pages 3 - 30)

Report of the Director of Change and Delivery.

Chris Sinnott
Chief Executive

Electronic agendas sent to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Change and Delivery)	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Thursday, 3 October 2024

Corporate Strategy 24/25 Refresh Update

Is this report confidential?	No
Is this decision key?	Yes
Savings or expenditure amounting to greater than £100,000	Significant impact on 2 or more council wards

Purpose of the Report

- To update the Committee on the refresh of the Corporate Strategy 2024/2025.

Recommendations

- That the update of the Corporate Strategy 24/25 be reviewed.

Reasons for recommendations

- To ensure that the Corporate Strategy reflects the needs of the borough and that council resources are directed towards key priorities.
- At the Portfolio Exchange Meeting on 11th July 2024, Members agreed that the four key priorities of the Corporate Strategy 2023/2024 (Appendix A) should be retained. It was noted that they have only been in place since late 2022, and that they are broad enough to remain relevant as the coming years' priorities.
- It was agreed that many of the commitments identified under each of the key themes also remain relevant and will be retained
- It was agreed that the corporate strategy projects will be refreshed to reflect our ongoing commitment to deliver key pieces of work for our residents and communities. The projects could be a continuation of current projects whereby they need to move to the next phases or completely new projects that have been identified.
- At a further Portfolio Exchange meeting on 12 September, Executive Cabinet members were asked to consider proposed projects and developments within their portfolios.

Corporate priorities

8. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Housing where residents can live well	A green and sustainable borough
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas	Healthy, safe and engaged communities

Background to the report

9. The Corporate Strategy is fundamental in guiding better outcomes for the borough. Successful delivery requires the council to take an intelligence led approach to strategic planning, taking into consideration emerging economic and political changes. As such the strategy is developed with thought for national, regional, local challenges and opportunities as set out in Appendix C. The Council is an ambitious and dynamic organisation and will adapt and respond to the needs of the borough as a community leader, maintaining a commitment to excellent services.

10. New Labour Government – 5 main missions

- Sustained economic growth – business, jobs and new homes
- Clean and green economy – energy, fuel poverty, green jobs, water
- Cracking down on crime and anti-social behaviour
- Focus on young people education and childcare
- Fit for the future healthcare provision

11. Local Government sector

○ **Devolution of power across England:**

The Levelling Up White Paper set out the previous government’s approach to rebalancing opportunities across the UK through the redistribution of government powers and funding. The White Paper included new details on the approach to devolution, guidance on a UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and underpinning policy, monitoring and metrics. The Levelling Up approach is based around 12 ‘missions’ to be achieved by 2030. These missions are based on four areas around boosting productivity and living standards by the private sector; improving public services; restoring community and local belonging; and empowering local leaders.

The Lancashire 2050 Framework set out the challenges and opportunities facing the county in eight key areas – including the economy, housing and transport. The council needs to ensure that it is well-positioned to secure opportunities for the borough and minimise any risks, particularly in any devolution discussions.

The deal that was agreed between the county council, Blackpool, and Blackburn with Darwen and the previous government is going to be finalised. That means that a Combined County Authority will be created for Lancashire. Districts won't be full members of the combined authority but will instead be represented by two leaders who may get some limited voting rights, but that's not certain yet. The Leaders at both councils had been advocating for a new deal that would have included a mayor and the full involvement of all 15 councils in Lancashire. That isn't going to now happen, although the government have asked Lancashire to

look at options around governance models and a mayor and come forward with proposals.

○ **Increased demand for services:**

As public spending continues to face demand pressures and the potential for impact across the economy it is essential that the Council has a robust plan to ensure sustainable services in future. It will also be important to leverage recent investment in key assets to add value to the community and local economy. Many of the current corporate initiatives and projects provide support for residents in response to the cost of living crisis and will continue into future years including home energy efficiency and family support. Coordinated communications will be vital to ensure that benefits are highlighted to residents, raising the profile of the council, and increasing overall satisfaction.

○ **Financial position:**

The current financial outlook is still uncertain. Following a single year settlement in 2024/25 it appears likely that once again this will be the case for 2025/26 with the possibility of greater certainty in the years to follow. With that greater certainty there is some risk that the Council could face reductions in financial settlements if a redistribution of funds occurs. As noted in the Councils Medium Term Financial Strategy presented to Council in February 2024 there remain risks around the future of business rates, the fair funding review and New Homes Bonus. The 2024/25 pay award is not yet confirmed and remains a potential pressure on Council budgets although provision was made for a significant increase. Overall while the Council remains financially stable there are budget gaps across the medium term meaning the Council must continue to prepare for the risks identified.

○ **Sustainability:**

The previous government published its Net Zero Strategy setting out how the UK will transition to a net zero economy by 2050. The main policy areas of the plan include:

1. Working with the grain of consumer choice: no one will be required to rip out their existing boiler, for example.
2. Ensuring the biggest polluters pay the most for the transition: through fair carbon pricing.
3. Ensuring that the most vulnerable are protected through government support: including energy bill discounts and efficiency upgrades.
4. Working with business to continue developing deep cost reductions in low carbon tech: through support for the latest state of the art kit to bring down costs for consumers and deliver benefits for businesses.

The Net Zero Strategy was successfully challenged by green activists in court arguing that the climate change strategy did not spell out how carbon emissions cuts would be achieved. A further policy document, Powering up Britain, was released in March 2023 and sets out how the government intends to enhance the country's energy security, and deliver the net zero commitments. Academics and green groups remain critical that the policy measures outlined will not make enough impact to meet the net zero ambitions.

This Council has its own ambitions to reach net zero by 2030 and we will have to continue to work with local partners and central government to consider any

future policy frameworks and funding opportunities, alongside the role of local government in delivering new green infrastructure and supporting green jobs.

12. Local insight

○ **Borough profile:**

Over the past decade, the population size has increased by 9.9% from around 107,200 in 2011 to 117,800 in 2021. This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%) and the North West (5.2%). Chorley has seen the second largest population increase in the North West. In 2021, Chorley ranked 201st for total population out of 309 local authority areas in England, moving up 14 places in a decade. It is estimated that between 2014 and 2043 the population of Chorley will increase by 17.8%, the highest predicted growth rate by some way in Lancashire.

In 2021, Chorley is the 15th least densely populated of the North West 39 local authority areas. The number of households is projected to increase by a substantial 24.4% between 2018 and 2043, this is the second largest growth rate in Lancashire and exceeds the predicted percentage growth in households in England of 16.2%.

In terms of working age population, those aged 15 to 64 years in Chorley account for 62.6% of the population, which is a 1% increase from the 61.6% recorded in 2020 and is higher than Lancashire (60.7%) in 2020. In 2021, there has been an increase of 34.7% in people aged 65 years and over, and an increase of 10.2% in children aged under 15 years.

○ **Performance:**

Since the last index in 2015 all other areas of Lancashire have seen an increase in deprivation except Chorley and West Lancashire which have become relatively less deprived. The change in percentage is an increase of 3.5% from 2015 to 2019. Chorley has a decile rating of 7 which is higher than the previous figure of 6 in 2004/2007/2015. The Chorley Ward (E01024968) is ranked in Lancashire's 12 area's 5 least deprived wards.

The number of Chorley Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in the bottom 20% of most deprived areas in England is eight however Chorley has 0 in the bottom 1% and 5% and only three within the bottom 10%. However Chorley does have 20 LSOAs in the top 20% of least deprived areas as well as seven in the top 10% and three in the top 5%.

Life expectancy in the borough is lower than the national average, with life expectancy in Chorley for men at 79.3 and women 82.6 compared to compared to 78.7 for men and 82.8 for woman in England. Life expectancy in Chorley is also higher than the regional average which is 77.2 for men and 81.3 for women.

○ **Residents Survey:**

A residents' satisfaction survey was undertaken between January and February 2024 to understand the views of residents about the local area, life in Chorley, the impact and support needed to recover from the Cost of Living crisis and input into the delivery of the Council's ambitions around climate change.

The residents’ survey tracked similar questions used in previously surveys conducted by the Council in 2021 ,2017, 2015 and 2013. The survey achieved 1,432 responses, which have been weighted to ensure the results are representative of the borough population.

The questionnaire asked residents to provide their views of the local area, the council, and the services that the council provides. Of the eight corporate indicators, two are performing worse than target but within the 5% tolerance and six are performing worse than target and outside the 5% tolerance. A breakdown of the results for these indicators can be found at Appendix B and comparisons have been made with the results of the last resident survey which was conducted in 2021.

The overall findings from the survey shows that in general residents’ satisfaction has decreased compared to the previous period in which the survey was conducted in 2021. Nationally there has been a decline in satisfaction, reflecting general discontent across the country.

When benchmarked against other councils, the comparisons indicate that Chorley is performing better when it comes to resident satisfaction. Three core areas have been identified by the Local Government Association (LGA) as being of strategic and practical importance in terms of helping councils understand the extent to which their residents are satisfied with their performance. The comparison shows that Chorley Council is performing better than the average in all three core areas.

These questions from latest poll (February 2024) from the Local Government Association (LGA) of resident satisfaction with councils are outlined in the table below. This round of polling saw some of the lowest/joint lowest scores since polling began in areas such as satisfaction with the way local council(s) run things and the extent to which local council(s) act on the concerns of local residents.

Residents’ Survey 2023/24 (Including ‘Don’t Know/No Opinion’ responses)			LGA ‘Polling’*
LG Inform	Question	Chorley 2023/24	February 2024
Core A	Overall, how satisfied, or dissatisfied are your local area as a place to live?	82%	74%
Core B	Overall, how satisfied, or dissatisfied are you with the way the Council runs things?	66%	53%
Core C	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Council provides value for money?	49%	40%

* The Local Government Association (LGA) poll conducted in February 2024 took a representative random sample of 1,000 British adults (aged 18 or over).

13. The refresh has been conducted in collaboration with Members, employees, SLT and SMT. Stakeholders have been engaged at the following events:
 - Chorley Portfolio Exchange – 11 July 2024
 - SMT – 4 Sept 2024
 - Employee Engagement/Development session (at Chorley) – 10 Sept 2024
 - Chorley Portfolio Exchange – 12 Sept 2024
 - Employee Engagement Group – 23 Sept 2024

- SLT – 24 Sept 2024
- SMT – 25 Sept 2024

14. Stakeholders will continue to be engaged throughout the process detailed below.

- Drafting of strategies and indicators (September - October)
- Indicator identification and target setting
- Finalising strategies (November)
- Budget planning (December – February)
- Budget consultation (January)

15. Proposed Project Areas

- Housing & Homelessness
 - Access to affordable housing and accommodation
 - Housing standards
- Environment
 - Net Zero actions
 - Food waste collections
- Economy
 - Astley Hall developments
 - Visitor economy
 - Jobs & Skills
 - Business grants
 - Local Plan
 - Woodlands
- Communities
 - Provision for disabled residents
 - Leisure facilities
 - VCFSE development
 - Anti-social behaviour

Climate change and air quality

16. The work noted in this report has an overall positive impact on the council's carbon emissions and the wider climate emergency and sustainability targets of the council.

17. In particular the report impacts on the following activities:

- a. net carbon zero by 2030,
- b. energy use / renewable energy sources
- c. waste and the use of single use plastics,
- d. sustainable forms of transport,
- e. air quality,
- f. flooding risks,
- g. green areas and biodiversity.

Equality and diversity

18. Equality Impact Assessments will be completed for all corporate strategy projects before they commence.

Risk

- 19. There are no implications at this stage but risk assessments will be completed for all corporate strategy projects before they commence.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

- 20. The Corporate Strategy directly links in to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy presented to Council as part of budget setting annually. The impact of specific projects will be reflected in the budgets required to be set both in respect of increases and efficiencies.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

- 21. This section is to be completed by the Monitoring Officer (or by the Deputy Monitoring Officer if not available) and will include any legal implications for the Council.

Background documents

Appendix A – Chorley Council Corporate Strategy 2023/2024

Appendix B - Performance of Chorley Residents' Survey 2023/24 measures

Appendix C – Chorley Big Issues 2024

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Appendix B: Performance of the Residents' Survey measures

★ Performance is better than target
 ● Worse than target but within threshold
 ▲ Worse than target, outside threshold

Indicator Name	Polarity	Target	2021 Results	2023/24 Results		Trend
Percentage of people satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live	Bigger is Better	85%	86%	82%	●	Worse than 2021
Percentage of people who feel they cannot influence decision making in their local area*	Smaller is Better	25%	30%	33%	▲	Worse than 2021
Percentage of the population satisfied with parks and open spaces	Bigger is Better	80%	82%	75%	▲	Worse than 2021
Percentage of the population feeling safe during the day	Bigger is Better	90%	92%	89%	●	Worse than 2021
Percentage of the population feeling safe at night	Bigger is Better	70%	64%	60%	▲	Worse than 2021
Satisfaction with street cleanliness	Bigger is Better	70%	67%	61%	▲	Worse than 2021
Percentage of residents satisfied with the way the Council runs things	Bigger is Better	70%	73%	66%	▲	Worse than 2021
Percentage of residents who feel that Chorley Council provide value for money	Bigger is Better	60%	56%	49%	▲	Worse than 2021

*Reflected in the answers provided to those responding on the council acts on the concerns of local residents.

CORPORATE STRATEGY 2023/24



OUR VISION

Enabling strong communities, a resilient economy, excellent services, a greener future and successful people.



Housing where residents can live well

OUR COMMITMENT

- Deliver affordable and energy efficient housing
 - Strive for good quality housing for all
- Work with partners supporting new ways to prevent homelessness
 - Support our most vulnerable residents



A green and sustainable borough

OUR COMMITMENT

- Work towards our commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030
 - Support waste reduction, reuse and recycling
- Work with partners to retain natural habitats and improve air quality
 - Promote sustainable transport and infrastructure



An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas

OUR COMMITMENT

- Support business growth and expansion across the borough
- Work with partners to support skills development and innovation
- Work with partners to promote the district as a visitor destination and attract investment in our local service centres
 - Promote the green economy



Healthy, safe and engaged communities

OUR COMMITMENT

- Support and encourage active lifestyles and health and wellbeing
- Support development of leisure services and facilities meeting the needs of residents
 - Deliver events and places to go for everyone
- Ensure all residents of all ages can access the services they need, physically and digitally
 - Promote resilient, cohesive neighbourhoods by listening and responding
- Work with partners to join up public services so that they make sense for everyone



Housing where residents can live well

OUR COMMITMENT

- Deliver affordable and energy efficient housing
- Strive for good quality housing for all
- Work with partners supporting new ways to prevent homelessness
- Support our most vulnerable residents

“Access to clean, safe and decent homes should be the starting point, not an aspiration”

WE WILL

Refresh the Prevention of Homelessness Strategy

By working with partners to address existing and emerging issues

Develop and Deliver a Plan to Improve Housing Standards Across the Borough

To drive improvements in housing standards

Deliver the Home Energy Support Scheme

Including practical support to install energy saving measures

Refresh the Housing Strategy

To ensure that everyone in the borough is able to live in good quality and suitable homes

Deliver the Local Plan

Provide a clear plan for development

MEASURING SUCCESS

- Number of long-term empty properties in the borough
- % of households living in fuel poverty
- Number of affordable homes delivered





A green and sustainable borough

“Green is about being responsible now for tomorrow’s future”

OUR COMMITMENT

- Work towards our commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030
- Support waste reduction, reuse and recycling
- Work with partners to retain natural habitats and improve air quality
- Promote sustainable transport and infrastructure

WE WILL

Continue to deliver improvements to Chorley’s Bus Shelter Network

Improve bus shelters and introduce green shelters to enhance biodiversity

Increase the Number of Parks with a Green Flag Status

Enhance local parks and natural habitats

Deliver the Business Energy Support Scheme to Boost Businesses Across the Borough

Providing support and advice on energy adaptations and potential improvement grants

Deliver a Rural Business Support and Grant Scheme

Create specific support packages for rural businesses

Maintain and Improve Council Buildings

To create a modern environment and attractive workspace to support the way we work

Develop and Deliver a Plan to Improve Chorley Bus Station

Provide a key transport hub as well as welcoming visitors to the town centre

MEASURING SUCCESS

- Number of Bus Shelters Improved
- Number of Trees Planted
- Number of improvements to parks, open spaces and playing pitches linked to strategy delivery
- % of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting





An enterprising economy
with vibrant local centres
in urban and rural areas

OUR COMMITMENT

- Support business growth and expansion across the borough
- Work with partners to support skills development and innovation
- Work with partners to promote the district as a visitor destination and attract investment in our local service centres
- Promote the green economy



*“Working with businesses
and people to realise
their potential”*

WE WILL

Develop a Destination Management Plan for the Borough

Encourage more visitors to the borough

Deliver a Jobs and Skills Programme to Upskill Residents Across the Borough

Promote future career pathways and develop the future skills pipeline to meet the needs of local enterprise

Refresh of the Economic Development Strategy to Promote Growth Across the Borough

Enabling and promoting a strong economy

MEASURING SUCCESS

- Number of projected jobs created through Chorley Council support or intervention
- The % of 16-17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- Number of Business Engagements by the Council
- Growth in business rate base



Healthy, safe and engaged communities

OUR COMMITMENT

- Support and encourage active lifestyles and health and wellbeing
- Support development of leisure services and facilities meeting the needs of residents
- Deliver events and places to go for everyone
- Ensure all residents of all ages can access the services they need, physically and digitally
- Promote resilient, cohesive neighbourhoods by listening and responding
- Work with partners to join up public services so that they make sense for everyone



“Across the borough communities have the tools and ability to achieve their best”

WE WILL

Launch an Enhanced Social Prescribing Service Focussed on Supporting Family and Early Years

Taking an early action and prevention approach to support at families and children

Deliver the Cost of Living Action Plan

By providing a range of support and intervention including food and fuel poverty, debt and housing

Deliver a Health and Wellbeing Programme to Support the Needs of Residents Across the Borough

Develop a community-based health and wellbeing programme

Delivery of a Borough Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan

Work with our partners and businesses to tackle issues quickly and effectively

Refresh and Deliver the Transformation Programme

Respond to significant national, regional and local challenges effectively

MEASURING SUCCESS

- Number of visits to Council Leisure Centres
- Average improvement in wellbeing score following support from the council
- Average % reduction in GP appointments following support from the council
- % of service requests received online
- % of customers dissatisfied with the service they have received from the Council
- % increase in visitor numbers



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**BIG
ISSUES
BRIEFING
2024**

Purpose

The Corporate Strategy is the Council's key strategic document setting out our vision and priorities, and as such it is important to undertake an annual review to plan for the following 12 months. This further informs the allocation of resources through the budget setting process, Medium Term Financial Strategy, and capital programme. The Corporate Strategy was last refreshed in October 2023 and reflected the impact of the cost of living crisis on the lives of residents and the wider operating context of the Council. The strategy for the 2025/26 financial year will be approved by full Council in November 2024.

It is anticipated that the overall vision and priorities of the Council will continue as these reflect longer-term commitments. However, the new government may implement new national policies and so areas of emphasis may change. This document aims to provide a starting point and focus for discussions as part of reviewing the Corporate Strategy and budget development process.

Key Issues

Major schemes and investments

In 2023, the Council has secured £20 million from the Government's Levelling Up Fund for town centre improvements. Regeneration works include the creation of a Civic square for community use and events and enhancements to the public realm, connecting key areas to encourage active travel, reduce car journeys, and minimize noise and pollution in the town centre.

Since April 2023, we have made enhancements to 12 different parks and open spaces across the borough. Highlights of investment works undertaken include improvements to the changing facilities at King George V Playing Pitches, an indoor and outdoor archery facility at Wigan Lane Sports Hub and improvement work to the play areas at Astley Park and West Way. These initiatives reflect the Council's commitment to creating vibrant, accessible spaces for the community to enjoy.

The historic Astley Hall Located in the stunning Astley Park, celebrates its 100 years since opening to the public as a museum. To celebrate this milestone the Council launched the 100 years of Astley memories initiative, inviting members of the public to share their stories and experiences of the hall and in turn become a part of the hall's history. Astley Hall remains one of our premier visitor destinations and an invaluable asset to Chorley. Looking ahead it will be vital to make the most of local assets through strategic marketing, promotion and ensuring the events programme is aligned with key plans and strategies.

Housing

Housing was again identified as a key corporate priority last year. Projects within the current Corporate Strategy include:

- Deliver affordable and energy efficient housing.
- Strive for good quality housing for all.
- Work with partners supporting new ways to prevent homelessness.
- Support our most vulnerable residents.

The Tatton Gardens project completed in 2023 and was shortlisted for three awards at the North West Regional Construction Awards. The state-of-the-art facility provides specialist housing and care facilities to individuals aged 55 and over and has transformed the local area. The scheme received at Sub-regional Project of the Year Award, demonstrating the dedication of all involved in creating the fantastic facility.

Community engagement

The Council continues to work with communities to build resilience through engagement activities such as holiday clubs and digital support. Strengthening community resilience is central to our approach, as it can improve the health, wellbeing, and outcomes of our residents, as well as reducing demand on public services in the long term. The Council endeavours to implement plans that are co-produced with the community, community groups, and partners to target areas where support is needed the most. The Communities Team review plans on an annual basis and the key actions that have been identified for 2024/2025 in addition to the Corporate Strategy projects are:

- Implementing and embedding the review of the Communities service.
- Deliver community based, year-3 UKSPF projects.
- Secure sustainable funding for grant-supported services.
- Improve the infrastructure support for voluntary, community and faith sector.

Performance and Transformation

Performance has remained strong with all corporate projects now underway and largely on track to deliver as expected. Shared Services continue to provide greater capacity, expertise, and skills as well as achieving savings for the Council. Local councils are evolving to be “fit for the future” in the face of the myriad of challenges they are facing. These include managing budgets to support rising costs and demands, maximising the use of evolving digital and technological developments, supporting community wellbeing, issues arising from the aftermath of the pandemic and ensuring sustainability.

Chorley Council is no exception, and although we have been fortunate in being able to achieve balanced budgets to date, transformation and change is required to ensure the Council is fit for the future and able to serve residents in the most efficient and effective ways. The Fit for the Future programme aims to streamline initiatives to save money, develop more commercial approaches, generate income and to transform to ensure that the councils are modern and sustainable.

Public service reform and partnership working

The Chorley and South Ribble Partnership has continued to collaborate with partners to ensure that we provide more co-ordinated service to meet the need of our residents. We have launched a new data sharing platform that brings together data from an array of partners ranging from education, social housing, health and policing. The platform brings together local data sources to provide overarching, place-based insights to help us make more informed decisions. This aligns with our broader commitment to enhancing service delivery and fostering collaborative solutions for our residents. Going forwards, the platform will provide a distinct benefit by bringing all place-based data together into a single repository for the first time, providing access to a more comprehensive and localised view than is available with any individual source of data. New integrated neighbourhood teams in the health sector continue to highlight better ways of delivering services to better meet needs. As a Council we will learn from this and implement improvements to our services.

Looking ahead

The future of local government funding remains uncertain, and it is essential that the Council has a robust plan to ensure sustainable services in future. It is important to leverage recent investment in key assets to add value to the community and local economy. Many of the current corporate initiatives and projects provide support for residents in response to the cost of living crisis and these will continue into future years. These initiatives include interventions for food and fuel poverty, debt, housing, and a community-based health and wellbeing programme. Targeted communications will be fundamental to ensure that benefits are highlighted to residents, raising the profile of the Council, and increasing overall satisfaction.

Policy Context

The following details the changes and shifts in national policy which may affect the council's direction and delivery over the next 12 months:

Changes in Government

The recent general election has seen a new Government formed whose new national policies will undoubtedly impact regional policy making.

The new Governments 5 main missions are:

- Kickstart economic growth to secure the highest sustained growth in the G7 by:
 - Delivering economic stability with tough spending rules
 - Creating a new partnership with business to boost growth everywhere
 - Establish a National Wealth Fund to invest in jobs
 - Initiate planning reform to build 1.5 million new homes
 - Devolution of power across England
 - Formulate a New Deal for Working People
- Make Britain a clean energy superpower to cut bills, create jobs and deliver security with cheaper, zero-carbon electricity by 2030, accelerating to net zero by:
 - Setting up Great British Energy to cut bills for good
 - Having energy independence
 - Creating 650,000 new high-quality jobs
 - Creating warmer homes to slash fuel poverty
 - Forcing water companies to clean up rivers
- Halving serious violent crime and raising confidence in the police and criminal justice system to its highest levels by:
 - Cracking down on antisocial behaviour with more neighbourhood police
 - Implementing tough new penalties for offenders
 - Getting knives off the streets
 - Establishing a specialist rape unit in every police force
 - Creating a new network of Young Futures hubs
- Breaking down barriers to opportunity by reforming childcare and education systems, to make sure there is no class ceiling on the ambitions of young people in Britain.

- Build an NHS fit for the future that is there when people need it; with fewer lives lost to the biggest killers; in a fairer Britain, where everyone lives well for longer.

Central government finances

The 2024 Spring Budget was presented to Parliament on 6 March 2024 by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Key policy changes from the spring statement include:

- National Insurance, a payroll tax, cut by 2p in the pound for employees and the self-employed.
- The salary thresholds at which people start paying income tax and national insurance remain frozen - meaning people will pay more tax as their incomes rise.
- Full child benefits are to be paid to households where the highest-earning parent earns up to £60,000 - the current limit is £50,000.
- Partial child benefit to be paid where the highest earner earns up to £80,000.
- Longer repayment period for people on benefits taking out emergency budgeting loans from the government.
- Government fund for people struggling with cost of living pressures to continue for another six months.
- Freeze on alcohol duty, due to end in August 2024, to continue until February 2025.
- New tax on vaping products from October 2026, linked to the levels of nicotine.
- Tobacco duty to go up £2.00 per 100 cigarettes at same time, to ensure vaping remains cheaper.
- Fuel duty frozen again, with the 5p cut in fuel duty on petrol and diesel, due to end later this month, kept for another year.
- A further £120m for a government fund that invests in green energy projects.
- Higher rate of tax paid on profits from selling property cut from 28% to 24%.
- Threshold at which small businesses must register to pay VAT raised from £85,000 to £90,000 from April.

The local government 2024/25 financial settlement was agreed in February 2024 and once again only covered a one-year settlement. The 2023/24 settlement had already confirmed that Chorley will continue to benefit from additional business rates income of approximately £1.2m per annum from the Lancashire Business Rate Pool. To address any possible increases to budget shortfalls, reviews of the Council's financial position will continue to take place throughout the year.

There are additional costs that impact on the Council's budget because of the Local Government 2023/24 pay offer. A pay award was agreed in November 2023 of £1,925 per full-time equivalent, for which no additional funding provided. The increase presents a recurring cost pressure for 2024/25 and beyond, with the Local Government 2024 pay negotiations still ongoing.

Economy

The local economy is still being impacted by the increased cost of living. The UK inflation rate has fallen from 10.1% in Jan 2023 to 2% in May 2023. The continued rise in the cost of food, wholesale gas and oil prices, and increased supply chain costs will have an impact on residents, local businesses, and Council operations. Government support has been available in the form of grants such as the Household Support Fund, Council tax rebates, and energy bill support scheme, alongside additional support provided by the Council.

To combat high inflation, the Bank of England has increased the interest rate multiple times to 5.25% as at July 2024. This will impact residents, businesses, and Council financial planning. Further discussions will include how we can best support our local economy and the communities and businesses which are most in need of additional support.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), which is aligned to the Government's Levelling Up agenda, will offer support programmes under the priorities of:

- Communities and place
- Local businesses
- People and skills.

Chorley has been allocated £4,212,901 over a three-year period up to 2024/25. The fund is a replacement for previous European funding and while it is significantly less than the previous allocations, it is directly within the Council's control rather than regional partners. There is no confirmation of funding beyond 24/25.

Community wellbeing

The Covid 19 pandemic continues to have an impact on resident's health and wellbeing across the borough, albeit this has reduced in comparison to previous years. The pandemic created a significant backlog of patients waiting for treatments, as non-urgent health care was limited throughout the pandemic. This backlog continues to be an issue and the NHS are currently facing significant staffing problems including industrial action. This is against the backdrop of existing widening gaps in inequality and it is expected that there will be increasing demand for health care in the following years.

At Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, the average waiting time for first outpatient appointments for general surgery is 29 weeks. Whilst the average waiting time for treatment at this trust for this general surgery is 24 weeks. Other areas to consider include A&E waiting times, timely test results, face to face GP appointments, and cancer treatments.

Population mental health has declined with issues such as increased anxiety, stress, and loneliness due to isolation. The economic impact of increases to the cost of living and rises in inflation will continue to impact on mental health, particularly for those in vulnerable groups.

There is ongoing industrial action within the health sector, with junior doctors and nurses undertaking strike action throughout 2023 and 2024. It is uncertain if this is likely to continue into 2025 and what impact this may have on waiting times for non-emergency procedures for residents. Consideration will have to be made for how we can adapt our current provision to ensure that the community support that we provide reflects these ongoing challenges.

Hybrid and flexible working

The Council recognises the advantages of flexible and hybrid working to attract and retain employees. Staff have the technology and equipment to enable working flexibly across multiple sites. As part of our Fit for the Future programme, we will be looking at how we can make the best use of our office assets. This approach ensures we provide a high quality, modern, fit for purpose workplace for all staff that enables mobility, flexibility, productivity, and collaboration across the Council whilst supporting our positive organisational culture.

Levelling up and devolution

The Levelling Up White Paper set out the previous government's approach to rebalancing opportunities across the UK through the redistribution of government powers and funding. The White Paper included details on the approach to devolution, guidance on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and underpinning policy, monitoring and metrics.

The Levelling Up approach is based around 12 'missions' to be achieved by 2030. These missions are based on four areas around boosting productivity and living standards by the private sector; improving public services; restoring community and local belonging; and empowering local leaders.

The Lancashire 2050 framework set out the challenges and opportunities facing the county in eight key areas – including the economy, housing and transport. There continue to be tensions in working across local government in Lancashire, and the Council will need to ensure that it is well-positioned to secure opportunities for the borough and minimise any risks, particularly through devolution discussions.

Devolution

At a Lancashire level, there has been progress on a Greater Lancashire Deal. The guidance is explicit on the need for a directly elected mayor to secure the highest level of powers, which has not been universally supported for Lancashire. The devolution structure does indicate that Chorley can still secure benefits in relation to key functions such as economic development and climate change.

The new county deals are a chance for upper-tier councils to ask government to transfer the changing planning powers up from the district level towards this new, strategic geography of their own creation to help reduce the pressure that planning and housing puts on each individual council. However, the potential impact of the county deal would be to exclude districts in the decision-making bodies with potential for some powers to be taken from districts and placed with the county authority.

Jobs and skills

The White Paper set out a series of policy aims to empower and regenerate the 'left behind' areas of the UK including the introduction of Education Investment Areas, the UK National Academy, new Institutes of Technology, and the Unit for Future Skills, among other provisions including increase in the National Living Wage. The paper stresses the links between people's health, education, skills, and employment prospects and focuses on policies that can ensure that everyone, wherever they live, has the opportunity to live fulfilling, healthy and productive lives.

The previous Government encouraged the integration of LEPs and their business boards into Mayoral Combined Authorities, Combined Authorities and County Deals, where these exist. Where a devolution deal does not yet exist, it is expected that LEPs will continue to play their role in supporting local businesses and the local economy.

Environmental policy

In November 2020, the Government set out a ten-point plan for a green industrial revolution, considering the approach to supporting green jobs, and accelerating the path to net zero emissions target. The plan focused on areas such as green power, transport, buildings, protecting our natural environment, and green finance and innovation.

In addition to the ten-point plan, the government published its Net Zero Strategy setting out how the UK will transition to a net zero economy by 2050. The main policy areas of the plan included:

- Working with the grain of consumer choice: no one will be required to rip out their existing boiler, for example.
- Ensuring the biggest polluters pay the most for the transition: through fair carbon pricing.
- Ensuring that the most vulnerable are protected through government support: including energy bill discounts and efficiency upgrades.
- Working with business to continue developing deep cost reductions in low carbon tech: through support for the latest state of the art kit to bring down costs for consumers and deliver benefits for businesses.

This Council has its own ambitions to reach net zero by 2030 and we will have to continue to work with local partners and central government to consider any future policy frameworks and funding opportunities, alongside the role of local government in delivering new green infrastructure and supporting green jobs.

Homelessness

Under the Homelessness Reduction Act, the Council has a statutory duty to support those who present as homeless. There are additional challenges that impact on homeless prevention and the number in temporary accommodation, these are mostly market factors that are out of the Council's control:

- It is expected that the cost of living crisis, evictions, and an increase in number of duties to refer presentations from statutory bodies such as hospital, probation, police, and prison services will likely increase the number of people presenting as homelessness
- Since 2023, Progress Housing committed to not evicting people in arrears which reduces the flow of any property becoming available. They will continue to do this as part of their tenant centred approach.

Any potential new measures could impact on our Housing Team and how we approach homelessness within our communities.

Boundary Commission

Following the 2023 Boundary Review it will be important that we continue to communicate the boundaries of our borough, ensuring that our communities and partners have a clear understanding of our local areas and place.

Chorley Borough Council

1. Demographics

Over the past decade, Chorley has seen the second largest population increase in the North West. The population size has increased by 9.9% from around 107,200 in 2011 to 117,800 in 2021. This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%) and the North West (5.2%). In 2021, Chorley ranked 201st for total population out of 309 local authority areas in England, moving up 14 places in a decade. It is estimated that between 2014 and 2043 the population of Chorley will increase by 17.8%, the highest predicted growth rate by some way in Lancashire.

In 2021, Chorley was the 15th least densely populated of the North West 39 local authority areas. The number of households is projected to increase by a substantial 24.4% between 2018 and 2043, this is the second largest growth rate in Lancashire and exceeds the predicted percentage growth in households in England of 16.2%.

In terms of working age population, those aged 15 to 64 years in Chorley account for 62.6% of the population, which is a 1% increase from the 61.6% recorded in 2020 and is higher than Lancashire (60.7%) in 2020. In 2021, there was an increase of 34.7% in people aged 65 years and over, and an increase of 10.2% in children aged under 15 years.

2. Health and Wellbeing

Since the last index in 2015, all other areas of Lancashire have seen an increase in deprivation except Chorley and West Lancashire which have become relatively less deprived. The change in percentage is an increase of 3.5% from 2015 to 2019. Chorley has a decile rating of 7 which is higher than the previous figure of 6 in 2004/2007/2015. The Chorley Ward (E01024968) is ranked in Lancashire 12 area's 5 least deprived wards.

The number of Chorley Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in the bottom 20% of most deprived areas in England is eight however Chorley has 0 in the bottom 1% and 5% and only three within the bottom 10%. However, Chorley does have 20 LSOAs in the top 20% of least deprived areas as well as seven in the top 10% and three in the top 5%.

The most recent information regarding the health of South Ribble population can be found in the district health profile (produced by Public Health England). Some of the key statistics include:

- Life expectancy in the borough is lower than the national average, with life expectancy in Chorley for men at 78.5 and women 81.9 compared to 78.9 for men and 82.8 for woman in England. Life expectancy in Chorley is also higher than the regional average which is 77.3 for men and 81.3 for women.
- The proportion of those killed and seriously injured on the roads (2016 -18) was 49.5 people per 100,000 and was higher than the North West (38.4) and England (42.6) average.
- The percentage of physically active adults has increased to 71.3% in 2022/23 from 70.5% in 2021/22. This is higher than the 2022/23 regional (65.7%) and national (67.1%) average. This change was not reflected in the overweight prevalence in adults which has increased from 61.5% in 2021/22 to 65.4% in 2022/23. This figure is lower than the regional average (66.5%) and national average (64%).
- The proportion of children who are classified as obese in Year 6 has increased consistently year upon year, from 19.5% in 2018/19, to 20.2% in 2019/20 before decreasing slightly to 19.8% in 2021/22. However this figure has now risen significantly again to 22.6% in 2022/23. This is still lower than the regional (23.8%) and national (22.7%) averages.

- The rate of hospital admissions for intentional Self-Harm decreased from in 176 per 100,000 in 2019/20 to 123 in 2020/21. This figure has now decreased again from 147.4 per 100,000 in 2021/22, to 114.5 per 100,000 in 2022/23. This figure remains a lot lower than the average for the North West (139.3) and England (126.3). For those admitted to hospital as a result of violent crime, the rate has increased slightly from 28.7 per 100,000 in 2019/20 to 31.2 in 2020/21. This has decreased by 1% in 2022/23 to 30.2 which is lower than both the regional (46.8) and national (34.3) averages.
- For those under 18 admitted to hospital over alcohol related conditions, the rate per 100,000 has decreased from 41.3 in 2020/21, to 35 in 2022/23 this remains above the North West average of 31.2 and national average of 26.
- The average Attainment 8 score for Chorley in 2022/23 is 48.1 this is lower than 2021/22 which was 50.6. This is higher than the regional average of 44.5 and the England average of 46.2 in 2022/23.
- According to the 2024 Residents' Survey, 75% of residents surveyed expressed satisfaction with parks and green open spaces in the local area, this is a decrease of 7% from the 2021 survey.

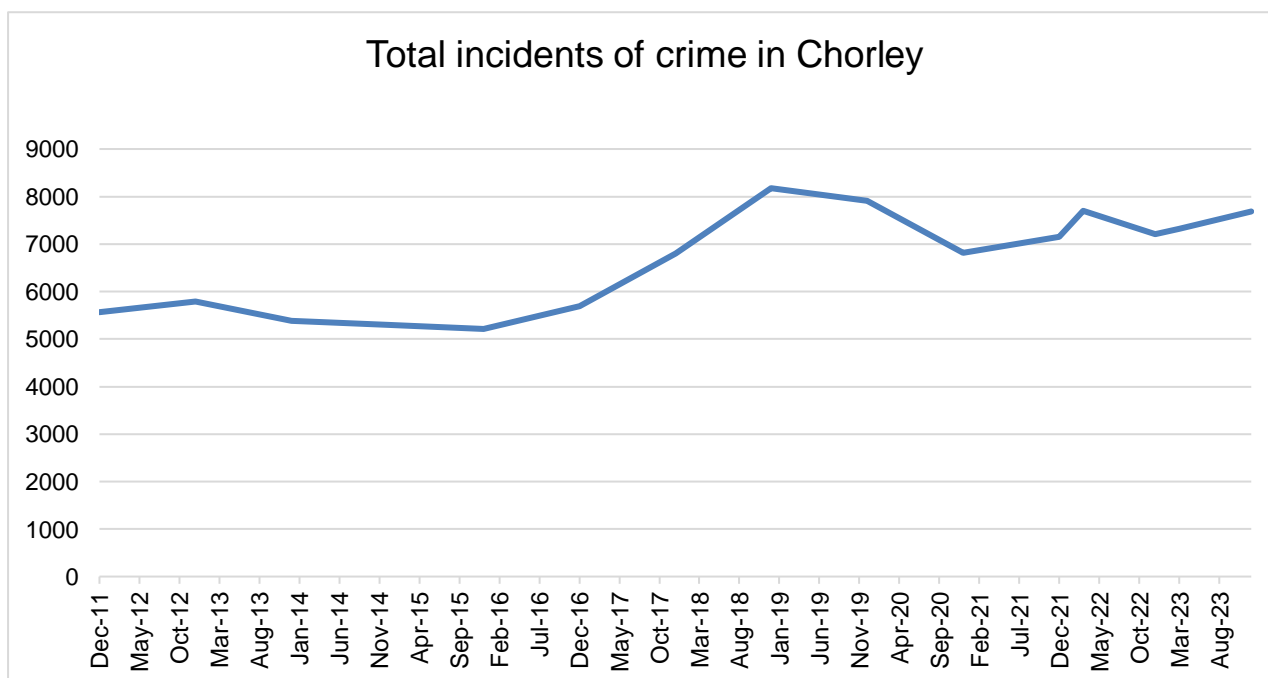
3. Crime and Safety

Overall recorded crime in Chorley has decreased slightly over the past year. The total number of crime incidents in the year ending in 2022 was 7,690. This has dropped to 7,387 in the year ending December 2023. This represents a decrease of just under 4% from the previous year. In 2023, the three most common offences were:

1. Violence against the person (3,325)
2. Theft offences (1,969)
3. Violence without injury (1,254)

According to the 2023/24 Residents' Survey, 89% of residents surveyed said that they feel 'safe' when outside their local area during the day and 60% said they feel 'safe' at night.

The table below shows the total incident of crime over an eleven-year period (excluding fraud):



4. Employment and Economy

Jobs, employment, and the economy

Chorley is part of Central Lancashire which operates as a relatively well-connected internal labour market with strong commuter flows between Preston, South Ribble and Chorley. Chorley also stands out as a supplier of labour to the Manchester city region, especially Bolton and Wigan. Employment figures (NOMIS) for 2023 show:

- There has been a decrease in the proportion of the population who are economically active, which stands at 69.4% in 2023 compared to 73.3% in 2022. This number remains significantly lower than both the North West (76.7%) and national (78.8%) average.
- The level of unemployment has decreased, with 3.1% of the economically active population not in employment compared to 3.2% in 2022. This is also better than the North West (3.8%) and equal to the national (3.7%) figures.

Table 1: Employment (January 2023 – December 2023, NOMIS)

	Chorley (number)	Chorley (%)	North West (%)	Great Britain (%)
Economically active (all)	52,700	69.4%	76.7%	78.8%
Economically active (males)	25,000	63.0%	80.6%	82.7%
Economically active (females)	27,700	75.7%	73.0%	74.9%

Table 2: Economic Inactivity (January 2023 – December 2023, NOMIS)

	Chorley (number)	Chorley (%)	North West (%)	Great Britain (%)
Total	21,500	30.6%	23.3%	21.2%

- By the end of March 2024, 3.6% of 16- to 17-year-olds were not in employment, education, or training. This has increased from the 2.5% recorded in March 2023.
- In May 2024, 2.6% of the working age population were claiming Universal Credit, of which 58.2% were male and 41.8% were female. This is lower than the 4.4% recorded in the North West and 3.9% nationally in the same period. However, this is higher than the 2.5% in May 2023 and the same as 2.6% recorded in May 2022.
- In 2023, there were 4,535 active enterprises in Chorley which is an increase compared to 4,725 in 2022. The biggest proportion of businesses in Chorley were micro enterprises of 0 to 9 employees, accounting for 88.9% of the total. It is slightly higher

than the 88.3% recorded for the North West and slightly lower than the Great Britain figure of 89.1%.

- The largest occupation type in the borough is in professional occupations. This accounted for 27.4% of employees in 2023, which represents a decrease from the 29.8% in 2022. It is however higher than the 26.3% North West average. The second most common occupation type is associate professional, accounting for 18.5% of employees.
- The average weekly earnings by place of residence in 2022 was £649.80 this has seen an increase to £668.5 in 2023. It is also higher than the North West average £649, but lower than the national average of £682.60.

Source:

NOMIS (2021). 'Labour Market Profile: Chorley', *NOMIS*. Available at [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://nomisweb.co.uk/labour-market-profile/nomis-official-census-and-labour-market-statistics)

Public Health England (2021). 'Local Authority Health Profiles', *PHE*. Available at <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/data#page/1/qid/1938132701/pat/6/ati/301/are/E07000118/iid/90366/age/1/sex/1/cat/-1/ctp/-1/yr/3/cid/4/tbm/1>

[Recorded crime data by Community Safety Partnership area - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/recorded-crime-data-by-community-safety-partnership-area)

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/area-profiles/local-authority-profiles/chorley-district/>

[How the population changed where you live, Census 2021 - ONS](https://ons.gov.uk/how-the-population-changed-where-you-live-census-2021)

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uk/nhs-england-best-worst-trust-near-me-postcode-waiting-times/>